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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/617,532	07/11/2003	Masatoshi Nakayama	27391/US587	3499

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EXAMINER

CHEN, TIANJIE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2627

DATE MAILED: 05/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/617,532

Applicant(s)

NAKAYAMA, MASATOSHI

Examiner

Tianjie Chen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 March 2006.  
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3 and 9 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,9 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

***Non-Final Rejection (RCE)***

***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 03/01/2006 has been entered. Claims 1, 3, and 9 are pending.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Meguro et al (US 6,538,847).

Claim 1, Meguro et al shows a thin-film magnetic head having an magnetoresistive (MR) head portion 23 (Fig.1, column 6, line 6) containing magnetoresistive elements, wherein a diamond-like carbon (DLC) protective film having a composition represented by the following formula:  $CH_a O_b N_c F_d B_e P_f$  (where  $a = 0$ ,  $b = 0$ ,  $c = 0$ ,  $d = 0$ ,  $e = 0$ ,  $a$  and  $f = 0$ , in terms of atomic ratio), and having a

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thickness of 10 - 30 Å (Column 9, lines 24-28), is formed directly (Column 9, lines 24-28) on at least the surface of the MR head portion facing a recording medium.

Claim 9, Meguro et al further shows in Fig. 3 that a slider is equipped with the thin-film magnetic head as described above.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meguro et al in view of Nepela et al (US 6,330,131).

Claim 3, Meguro et al does not show  $a = 0.05 - 0.7$ .

Nepela et al shows a protective layer wherein  $a = 0.03 - 0.4$  (Column 2, lines 49-54).

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one of ordinary skill in the art to set  $a = 0.03 - 0.4$  as taught by Nepela et al. The rationale is as follows: Meguro et al teaches a protective layer, but does not teach the method of making the layer. Nepela et al teaches a method of making the protective layer and teaches that if keep  $a = 0.03 - 0.4$ , the layer would have high hardness (Column 2, lines 49-54). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to set  $a = 0.03 - 0.4$  to obtain high hardness.

***Response to Arguments***

4. Applicant's arguments filed 03/01/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

- This is a US patent application. A US dictionary, rather than a Japanese dictionary, should be used in interpretation of the terms cited in the claim.

**several** *pron, pl in constr* (1686): an indefinite number more than two and fewer than many.

From: ***Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition.***

It clearly shows that the reference reads on claim 1 properly.

Examiner sees no reason the rejection should be traversed.

- Reference shows the protective layer covers the entire surface facing the recording medium, which reads perfectly the language recited in claim 1.
- Rejection maintains.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tianjie Chen whose telephone number is 571-272-7570. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-4:30, Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hoa Nguyen can be reached on 571-272-7579. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
**TIANJIE CHEN**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**